

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

As I come to each new book and chapter of the Bible, some folk kid me that I always say it is the greatest book or chapter. Very candidly, I must say that the little Book of Nahum is not the greatest in the Bible, but it is a great book, and it is in the Word of God for a very definite purpose. I dare say that very few people have ever heard a sermon from the little Book of Nahum. This book has received some attention from those who speak "the wild utterances of prophecy mongers," as Sir Robert Anderson calls them. These sensationalists would have us believe that Nahum prophesied of the automobile when in the second chapter he says that "The chariots shall rage in the streets" ([Nah. 2:4](#)). That, of course, has no reference at all to the automobile, as we will see when we come to it.

What we do have in the Book of Nahum is a remarkable prophecy, but one which seems very much out-of-date. To begin with, we know very little about Nahum personally, and he has just one theme: the judgment of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. This is all his prophecy is about, and it has already been fulfilled; so how can this book be meaningful to us today? How can it fit into our common and contemporary culture? Does Nahum have a message for us? The remarkable thing about the Word of God is that no matter where we turn we find a message for us. Some is specifically directed to us, but all of it is for us -- that is, it has a message for us.

The writer is Nahum, and his name means "comforter," but the message that he gives is one of judgment. How in the world can Nahum live up to his name? How can he be a comforter? Well, it is owing to how you look at the judgment. If it is a judgment upon your enemy, one of whom you are afraid, one who dominates you, then judgment can be a comfort to you.

Nahum is identified in the first verse of the book: "The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite." Who is an Elkoshite? Well, there are several possible identifications of the city of Elkosh. (1) There was a city of Elkosh in Assyria, a few miles north of the ruins of Nineveh. Nahum could well have lived there and prophesied to Nineveh, as Daniel did to Babylon later on. Very candidly, I do not think that is true; I believe that the content of the book reveals that Nahum did not go to Nineveh. I do not think he was there, nor was he ever called to go there. (2) Another explanation which is offered is that there was a village by the name of Elkosh in Galilee. Jerome recorded that a guide pointed out to him such a village as the birthplace of Nahum. I had that pointed out to me also when I was over there. However, the first time this was ever pointed out was a thousand years after Nahum lived, making such a view largely traditional. Also, Dr. John Davis gives the meaning for Capernaum as "the village of Nahum." If Capernaum is a Hebrew word, then this is the evident origin, and we have no reason to believe otherwise. Nahum was either born there, or he lived there as a boy. (3) Also, down in Judah there was a place called Elkosh. Elkosh seems to have been a common name. We have certain place names in this country of which you will find one in practically every state. You will find a city of the same name in California, in Texas, and then maybe way up in Connecticut. Evidently, Elkosh was a common name like that.

It is the belief of many that what actually happened was that Nahum was born up in the northern kingdom of Israel -- which would explain his great attachment to the northern kingdom -- but that he later moved down to Elkosh, a place in the south of Judah. He probably went down there as a lad and was raised in the southern kingdom.

The man who wrote this prophecy evidently knew something about Sennacherib's attack upon Jerusalem. It seems to be an eyewitness account that is given in the first chapter. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah during the reign of Hezekiah, Nahum was probably an eyewitness. This would mean that Nahum was a contemporary of both Isaiah and Micah, and this is the belief of some Bible expositors. I personally have not decided on any definite date at all. There are many dates which have been assigned to this book and this prophet. Dates are suggested anywhere from 720 B.C. to 636 B.C. by conservative scholars. It seems reasonable to locate Nahum about one hundred years after Jonah. He probably lived during the reign of Hezekiah and saw the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel, and he was greatly moved by that, of course.

Nahum sounds the death knell of Nineveh. He pronounces judgment by the total destruction of Assyria, Nineveh being the capital of that nation. Nahum maintains that God is just in His judgment of this nation.

Actually, I like to study the little Books of Jonah and Nahum together because it was between 100 and 150 years before Nahum appeared on the scene that Jonah went to Nineveh with a message from God. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and to bring a message there, a remarkable thing happened -- the entire city turned to God -- 100 percent. Frankly, there has never been anything quite like it in the history of the world. We simply do not seem to have anything else that could compare to an entire city, 100 percent, turning to God. How far-reaching it was in the nation I do not know, but certainly Nineveh, as the capital city, had a tremendous effect upon the nation, and there was a great turning to God in that day.

The question naturally arises: How did it work out? Did it last? Did this nation become a godly nation? And the answer is no -- they didn't. In time the revival wore off. In time they went back to their paganism. In time they became as brutal as they had been before. This nation had had a message from God, but now here comes Nahum with another message. I do not think that Nahum actually went to Nineveh. I believe that this man lived in the southern kingdom of Israel, and I don't think he left there. But if God sent Jonah to Nineveh, why did He not send Nahum? Well, God's methods vary. God certainly is immutable -- He never changes -- but He does change His methods at times. He sent Jonah to Nineveh because Nineveh was a great, wicked city, but they were totally ignorant of God. When the message was brought, the city turned to God, all the way from the king on the throne to the peasant in the hovel. As a result, God spared the city. Now 100 to 150 years have gone by, and the city has relapsed and returned back to its old way. Why doesn't Nahum go? Because they have already had the light, and they've rejected it.

The Lord Jesus spoke about light that is rejected. He said, ". . . If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" ([Matt. 6:23](#)). How can light be darkness in anyone? Light that is darkness is the rejection of the Word of God. There are more Bibles in this country of ours than any other book; it is the best-selling, but least

read, book. Assyria was a nation that had had light, but what was the net result? "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Assyria had had light -- God had sent a message to them -- and for awhile they turned and served the living and true God. It was a revival in the common sense of the term. It was wonderful, but it didn't last. Isn't that really the history of revivals? At the same time that France had a revolution, England had a revival under the Wesleys and Whitefield. There was a great turning to God, but how did England make out? Well, look at her today. At that time they were a first-rate nation. They were number one among the great nations of the world, but they are not number one today. They aren't number two; they aren't even number three. They are way down on the list today. What happened? They departed from the living and true God.

The first time I visited England, I asked my guide to take me to the cemetery across from Wesley's church where Wesley is buried. The guide had difficulty. He and the driver talked it over, looked at the city map, and finally wound their way through the streets of London until we arrived at the place. The guide said to me, "This is the first time I've ever brought anyone here. I think I will put it on our route and will bring people here when we take tours. I didn't know it was here." England had forgotten John Wesley. They had forgotten the great revival that took place under him. As a result, she has sunk down to a very low level for a nation which has had such a tremendous history. Those of us who had ancestors in the British Isles -- whether in England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland -- have to bow our heads today in shame. We feel like weeping when we think of the greatness of that nation and how at one time they listened to the voice of God. How like Nineveh! When Nineveh was no longer listening, Nahum said, "I'm not going over there. I'm not going to waste my time because there is no point in it. They have passed the point of no return."

And has this nation of mine come to that place today? This little book has a message for us, my friend. Quite a few years ago I cut out this little clipping which reads:

A United States Senator has stated that the average life of the great civilizations of the world has been about 200 years. He goes on to say that these civilizations have progressed (if that's the right word) through the following stages:

- from bondage to spiritual faith
- from spiritual faith to courage
- from courage to liberty
- from liberty to abundance
- from abundance to selfishness
- from selfishness to complacency
- from complacency to apathy
- from apathy back to bondage

The Senator points out the interesting fact that the United States of America will be 200 years old in 12 years. Which of the above stages do you think we're in? How much longer is our civilization going to last?

This nation has now passed its two-hundredth anniversary. Think about this for just a moment. Where are we today? Are we a nation of abundance? Yes, but the Lord is

beginning to cut us short. "From abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency" -- is that a picture of us today? "From complacency to apathy" -- there is an apathetic condition in our nation today. The next step, according to the senator, is "from apathy back to bondage."

This is the picture that is given of Nineveh, and this is the message of Nahum. A great world power, Assyria, with Nineveh as its capital, had a message from God. They turned to God and served God for a period of time. I do not know how long they served Him, but after 100 to 150 years had gone by, they were right back where they were before.

Now God is going to judge them. The question arises: Is He right in doing it? Nahum will say that He is not only right in doing it, but that He is also good when He does it. Some folk think the Book of Nahum should be called "Ho hum"! However, Nahum is a thrilling book to study because it reveals the other side of the attributes of God. God is love, but God is also holy and righteous and good. And God still moves in the lives of nations; therefore, this book speaks right into where we are today.

Outline

I. Justice and Goodness of God, [Nah. 1:1-8](#)

II. Justice and Goodness of God Demonstrated in Decision to Destroy Nineveh and to Give the Gospel, [Nah. 1:9-15](#)

III. Justice and Goodness of God Exhibited in Execution of His Decision to Destroy Nineveh, [Nah. 2](#) through [Nah. 3](#)

A. Annihilation of Assyria, [Nah. 2](#)

B. Avenging Action of God Justified, [Nah. 3](#)

Chapter 1

THEME: Justice and goodness of God

The little Book of Nahum is a remarkable prophecy. The prophet has just one theme, the judgment of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, but we will find that he also has a meaningful message for us today.

[The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite \[Nah. 1:1\].](#)

"The burden of Nineveh" -- burden means "judgment," as it is also used in the prophecy of Isaiah. Earlier, Jonah had brought a message to Nineveh which revealed the love of God, and now the message of the Book of Nahum reveals the justice of God -- the two go together. Although God will judge a nation, He is still love, and He still loves -- you cannot escape that. The thing which makes the judgment of God so frightful is the fact that God does not do it as a petulant person. He doesn't do it in a vindictive manner whatsoever. He does not do it in a spirit of revenge or of trying to get even. He does not judge because He has become angry for a moment in a sudden emotional outburst. God judges because He is just. He still loves, but He is just. Since He is just in His dealings, He must deal with sin even in the lives of those whom He loves.

Nineveh was a city that God loved -- He told Jonah that. Jonah wanted the city destroyed, but God said, "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" ([Jonah 4:11](#)). God wanted to spare the city and the people who were in it, many of whom were little children. And God had spared Nineveh, but now judgment is going to fall upon this great city -- this is Nahum's message. Jonah, almost a century and a half before, had brought a message from God, and Nineveh had repented. However, the repentance was transitory. God has patiently given this new generation opportunity to repent (see [v. 3](#)), but the day of grace now ends and the moment of doom comes. In [Nahum 3:19](#) we read, "There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit [news] of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" In other words, Nineveh has come to a place where there is no healing for her people.

I believe that for a nation and for an individual it is possible to continue in sin until you cross over a mark. I do not know where that mark is -- I don't pretend to be able to say when this takes place -- but there is such a place. When you pass over that mark, it is not that the grace of God cannot reach you but that you cannot reach God for the simple reason that you have come to the place where you are hardened and in a state of unbelief which cannot be changed. This can be true of a nation, and it can be true of an individual.

As you consider the things which are happening today, you are apt to be discouraged. I am sure that many of God's people are disturbed today. I believe that this is the reason we have had such an interest in prophecy. The wilder the prophetic teachers are, the more popular they seem to be. They are coming up with all kinds of interpretations. The explanation is that God's people, ignorant of the Word of God, are desperately reaching out because of the things which are happening today. The Lord Himself said, "Men's hearts [will be] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" ([Luke 21:26](#)). We are at that state for sure; we've come into that particular orbit today. These things are disturbing to us, but, my friend, let us understand that God is still running the affairs of this world. He is still in charge. It hasn't slipped out from His hands. God is not sitting on the edge of His throne, biting His fingernails. He is not nervous today about what is happening. God is carrying out His plan and purpose, and He is overruling the sin of man. This should be very comforting to the child of God in this day.

Assyria had served God's purpose and is now to be destroyed. The destruction of Nineveh, according to the details given in this written prophecy, is almost breathtaking. This is a message, therefore, of comfort to a people who live in fear of a powerful and godless nation: God will destroy any godless nation. All you need do is to pick up your history book and start reading at the beginning of written history. You will find that every great world power went down, and they went down at a time when they were given over to wine, women, and song. When a nation reaches that place, you can be sure that it is on the skids and will soon pass out into the limbo of the lost. That is where all the former great nations of the world are today.

Where is the United States today? We are on the way down, my friend. It is a nice ride while we are having it. Dr. J. Gresham Machen said years ago, "America today is going

downhill with a godly ancestry." America, which has had a godly ancestry, is going downhill on a toboggan. And Dr. Machen added, "God pity America when we reach the bottom of the hill." How close are we to the bottom of the hill? I'm no prophet nor the son of a prophet. I'm just a poor preacher, and all I can say is that it seems to me like we're getting very close to the bottom of the hill. The reason that the Book of Nahum is such a remarkable prophecy is that it speaks right into our own situation today.

"The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite." This is all that is known of the writer of this book, and I have discussed this at some length in the Introduction. Nahum was apparently born in the northern kingdom of Israel, and that was his native country; but he moved to the southern part of Judah sometime when he was very young. He had a great concern for the northern kingdom, and he apparently was alive when it was carried away into captivity by Assyria. His message is of the judgment that is coming upon Nineveh.

God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and
is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he
reserveth wrath for his enemies [\[Nah. 1:2\]](#).

Jealous, according to Webster's dictionary, means "exacting exclusive devotion." God is a jealous God, and He demands that His people worship Him alone. When any people, no matter who they are, turn to idolatry or turn to sin (all that which is contrary to God), and when they give themselves to it, God is jealous. I hear folk say, "Well, there is just a little bit of difference between the jealousy of God and the jealousy of man." There is not as much difference as you think there is, my friend. In [Exodus 20:3-6](#) we read: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

God loves you. It does not make any difference who you are, you cannot keep Him from loving you. You can, however, get into a place where you will not experience the love of God. When you put up an umbrella of sin, the sunshine of God's love will not fall on you, but it is still there for you. You can put up the umbrella of indifference. You can put up the umbrella by turning your back on Him and not doing His will. There are several different umbrellas you can put up that will keep the love of God from shining upon you, but you cannot keep Him from loving you.

Since God loves you, He is actually jealous of you. That means that He wants you. Actually, God doesn't want what you possess. We preachers are always asking you for what you have. I wish that I didn't ever have to mention giving -- frankly, I don't like to. If God's people would just give enough to cover our radio broadcasting expenses, you would never hear me mention it. But God doesn't want what you've got -- He wants you. And He's jealous when you give yourself, your time, and your substance to other things. When you give yourself to sin, God is jealous.

I once heard a woman say, "I have a very wonderful husband. He's not jealous of me." Well, I don't think that what she said was a compliment at all. We're living in a day when

people are supposed to be broad-minded, especially about this matter of sex. They argue that it's all right for a woman to give herself to the first man who comes along. May I say to you, my friend, if you are that type of woman, you will never get a good husband because the good husband is one who is going to love you and want you above everything else. And he won't want to share you with anybody. If you say that you don't have a jealous husband, I feel sorry for you, because you do not have a good relationship.

God very frankly says, "I'm a jealous God. I want you. I don't want to share you with the sin of the world and with the Devil's crowd and with idolatry. I don't want to share you -- I want you to belong to Me." There is nothing wrong with God's saying that He is jealous, and Nahum says, "God is jealous." I'm glad that He is.

Any good wife will say, "I don't want to share my husband with anybody else. He is mine. He belongs to me." This is something which is pretty important today but which the world has forgotten. It is no wonder that in Southern California we have more divorces than marriages. Of course that is what has happened, because people are playing a little game. You used to find the harlots in the brothels; but today it is called "consecutive harlotry," which means that you take one partner at a time, live with him for a little while, and then move on to another. It adds up to the same thing, however. My friend, if you are going to be loved, and if you love, there will be a measure of jealousy in the relationship -- there has to be if it is a real love.

"The LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious." The correct translation is not "revengeth," as it is in our Authorized Version -- rather, it should be "avengeth." There is a great difference between the two words. ". . . Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" ([Rom. 12:19](#)). God says to you and me, "Don't you indulge in vengeance because, to begin with, you will never exercise it in the right way. Turn it over to Me. I handle it without any heat of anger. I handle it in justice. I will do the right thing. And I know all the issues -- I know everything about it."

The Lord avengeth; and, whether we like it or not, anything God does is right. We need to get that fixed in our minds and, on the other end of the stick, we need to recognize that you and I are just little creatures who really don't know very much -- even the smartest ones don't. Frankly, I hate to say this, but I have quit listening to newscasts and talk programs on which they interview some egghead who is supposed to know something. I've discovered that most of these folk, as far as knowing what really is going on in this world, are ignoramuses who are just talking. We ought to recognize that we don't know much and that whatever God does is right. If you don't think so, you are wrong. God is not wrong -- you are wrong. I wonder if you are willing to take that position. If you're not, my friend, you're in trouble as far as God is concerned because there are many things He is not going to tell you or me about. He is simply going to go ahead and do them. He is running this universe His way. Oh, I know that we get a few power-hungry human beings, but they don't hang around long. Hitler didn't last long and neither did Mussolini nor Stalin. The others who are on the front page of our newspapers today will be in obituary notices in a few days -- it won't be long. May I say to you, God is still on the throne, and He is still running things.

God is "furious." God does not take any delight in the sin of man. God hates sin, and He is furious at it. "The LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." God is glorified when He judges a nation, as we see especially in [Ezekiel 38](#) -- [Ezekiel 39](#). When Assyria went down, God was glorified in that. They were a brutal, hated, sinful nation, and God brought them down to wrack and ruin and into the debris and dust of the earth. He is glorified when He does things like that. Maybe you don't like it, but the Word of God says that that is the way He moves. I would suggest that you get yourself reconciled to the way God does things, because that is the way they are going to be done.

In [verse 3](#) Nahum puts down a great principle by which God not only judged Assyria (and Nineveh, the capital, in particular), but also the way that God judges the world and will judge the world in the future.

The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all
acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in
the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet [[Nah. 1:3](#)].

"The LORD is slow to anger." Nahum makes this very clear. You see, God had sent Jonah to Nineveh to tell them that they were to be destroyed because of their awful sin. They were known as probably the most brutal people in the ancient world, and God said that judgment would come to them. But the entire city of Nineveh repented and turned to God at that time. Obviously, the message of Jonah penetrated the entire empire, and there was a great change. We would say that a great revival rose up. However, it didn't last very long. It has been characteristic of the great waves of revival which have come that they have never lasted permanently. The Wesleyan revival had tremendous impact upon England and this country, as well as side effects upon other nations, but it was of brief duration. There has been some carry-over from it, of course, even down to the present hour. This is true also of the great revivals under Moody in this country, when entire cities moved toward God. Nahum says that God is slow to anger, but this great city of Nineveh has now turned back to its old ways. One hundred years after Jonah, Nahum comes to say, "The clock has struck twelve, and time has run out. There is no longer any delay. Judgment is coming."

"The LORD . . . will not at all acquit the wicked." The justice of God is seen in His judgment because He is slow to anger. It took Him one hundred years to get around to executing judgment against this city, and He is just and righteous in doing it. He is not going to let the wicked off. Never will He let the wicked off unless they turn to Him. Unless they accept Christ as their Savior because He paid the penalty for their sins, they will have to be judged for their sins. God is not going to let them off -- He is just and righteous,

You see, the forgiveness of God is different from our forgiveness. When somebody does us wrong, we say, "I forgive you" -- and that's it. A penalty has not been paid. Our forgiveness is generally for something that is just a trifle, although it could be a matter of some importance. But when God forgives, the penalty has already been paid. God is the Judge of this earth. He is not only its Creator, He is not only running it, but He is also the moral ruler of this universe. And God is not a crooked judge. You cannot slip something under the table to get Him to let you off easy. You cannot tell Him that you belong to a

certain family, that your father is very influential and will be able to get you off. Nor can you say you are wealthy and will see that the Judge loses His job, nor that you will pay Him just a little extra to be lenient with you. You cannot deal with God like that.

God must judge the wicked, and we are all told that the heart of man is desperately wicked -- not just a little wicked, but desperately wicked (see [Jer. 17:9](#)). You and I do not really know the depths of the iniquity that is in our hearts; we do not know what we are capable of. Now God cannot acquit the wicked; therefore, if we are going to be acquitted, someone must pay the penalty. That is the reason He has provided a Redeemer for us. When an individual or a nation turns its back on God's redemption provided now in Christ, then judgment must follow -- there is no other alternative.

"The LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." God today moves even in nature. The storms which come are under His control, and they serve His purpose. So-called Mother Nature doesn't really have anything to do with it. Mother Nature does what He tells Mother Nature to do. Our God is the Creator, and He is the Redeemer, and He is also the Judge. He's running things, friend. Just leave it in His hands, and rest in Him today because He is good, He is gracious, and He is the Savior.

He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth [[Nah. 1:4](#)].

"He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers." God had already shown His power to do this -- He dried up the Red Sea and the Jordan River.

Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon are the three fertile areas in that land. Carmel is actually the Valley of Esdraelon, and Megiddo was the main city there. This is one of the most fertile spots on the topside of the earth. When you go farther north, along the cost of Lebanon all the way from Beirut down to the ruins of old Tyre, you see beautiful country. In the spring of the year, you can see the fruit trees blooming and in the distance the Anti-Lebanons covered with snow. The fruit trees -- apricots, peaches, cherries, bananas, and citrus fruit -- everything is grown there, and the land is very fertile.

Nahum says that a drought is to come. I am sure there are many of you who remember the dust storms in this country in the 1930s. I have always felt that those storms were a judgment from God. If there had been any kind of a revival at that time, I am confident we would never have had to fight World War II or to have been involved in all that we have since then. But unfortunately, that judgment from God carried no message for this country at that time.

The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein [[Nah. 1:5](#)].

He is the Creator, and He's also the Preserver of this universe -- He's the One who holds it together.

"The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt" refers, of course, to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. You can hold Him responsible for anything that takes place, for the

floods and the earthquakes that come. But don't hold Him responsible for the people who are killed at that time, because man has been given an intelligence which tells him that he ought not to build too close to a river due to the danger of a flood. Maybe those of us who live here in Southern California ought to listen to Him. We are told that an earthquake is coming, and that is probably true. The San Andreas fault runs very close to where I live, but if an earthquake comes and a loved one of mine is slain by it, I am not going to cry out to God that He is the one who killed him. No -- God is not responsible. We would be responsible. We know better. We probably ought to move to another location; but very frankly, my entire family likes Southern California, so we're going to stay right here and take the chance. God does control nature, but you cannot say that He is to blame when these great tragedies take place. Man is responsible for them. He ought not to get too close to a river, and he ought to stay away from where he knows there are going to be earthquakes.

Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him [\[Nah. 1:6\]](#).

Man has learned that you cannot stand up against nature. Victor Hugo wrote three great novels. He wrote *Les Miserables* to show that society is the enemy of man; he wrote *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to show that religion is the enemy of man; and he wrote *The Toilers of the Sea* to show that nature is the enemy of man. Well, it is owing to how man approaches each of these. Religion has been an enemy of man. Society is the enemy of man -- this civilization today is no friend of grace, I can assure you of that. It is true that nature can be an enemy of man, but it can also be his friend. The issue is that if you are going to try to fight against nature, you're fighting a losing battle. This is what Victor Hugo tried to show in his novel.

"Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" This question was directed to the people of Nineveh who had rejected the mercy of this all-powerful God. Do you have the answer to that question? I'd like to ask that of you if you are unsaved. Maybe you are depending upon your own righteousness and goodness. Do you really believe that you can stand in the presence of a holy God who absolutely hates sin and intends to judge it? Are you able to stand in His holy presence?

The very brilliant Oxford don, C. S. Lewis, wrote a story in which he tells about a bus trip that was run from hell to heaven. It was the sort of tour in which those who were in hell could take a bus trip to heaven. The bus was filled and, when it arrived in heaven, the driver parked the bus in a parking lot (I'm sure there is plenty of parking space up there). The driver told everyone on the bus, "At four o'clock this afternoon, the bus is going to leave and head for home." Home just happened to be hell. And at four o'clock that afternoon, the bus was filled -- everyone was back. The bus driver told them, "If you want to stay, you can stay." Why didn't they stay? It was because they had found out they had no place in heaven. One of the great saints of the past put it this way: "I would rather go to hell without sin than go to heaven with sin."

"Who can stand before his indignation?" If you don't have a Savior, how are you going to stand as a sinner in the presence of a holy God? Do you think that you've got a chance? You don't have a ghost of a chance, my friend. You cannot stand there without a Savior.

To be able to stand in His presence is what it means to be accepted into the beloved and to be in Christ. This is a tremendous principle that Nahum is putting down here. God must judge sin. There is something radically wrong with God if He doesn't judge sin.

Nahum's description of the power and the anger of God was to reassure the people of Judah of the protection of their all-powerful God when Assyria would invade their land.

[The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him \[Nah. 1:7\].](#)

"The LORD is good." Let's keep that in mind. Remember that the psalmist said, "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so . . ." ([Ps. 107:1-2](#)). If the redeemed don't say so, nobody's going to say so. So I am going to say so: God is good. God is good, friend -- that's wonderful to know. I do not know who you are, where you are, or how you are, but I do know that God loves you and He wants to save you. If you are not saved, it is simply because you will not come to Him, for He can save you and He will save you. God is good -- that is an axiom of Scripture and an axiom of life. "The LORD is good."

"A strong hold in the day of trouble." Are you having any trouble? Do you want to get to a good shelter? The Lord is that shelter which you need.

"And he knoweth them that trust in him." I'm very happy that I'm not going to get lost in the shuffle, that I won't get lost in the multitudes. As I travel from city to city, I sometimes think that everyone has moved to the West Coast. I get on one of our freeways here, and I think, My, how many people there are! But then I go back to Dallas, Texas, and I think that everyone has followed me from California to Texas! The crowds are everywhere. I go to Florida or to New York City, and it seems the people have followed me there. I have never seen such crowds in my life! I went to Europe several years ago and found that the people were there also! The multitudes which are in the Orient almost shock us. And in Egypt, in the Arab countries, and in Turkey there are multitudes of people. It causes me to think, My, I hope the Lord remembers that my name is Vernon McGee and that I have trusted Him. I am very happy that the Scripture says, "He knoweth them that trust in him." My friend, He doesn't need a computer to record your name. Actually, He has you written on His heart; He's written your name on the palms of His hands. He knows you -- He knows those who have trusted Him.

[But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies \[Nah. 1:8\].](#)

The Lord will overwhelm and destroy the Assyrians. "An overrunning flood" pictures a river that is overflowing its banks and causing devastation as it moves. It is believed that this refers to the invading army of the Babylonians which overcame Nineveh. The Greek historian Ctesias of the fifth century B.C. records that the Babylonian army was able to invade Nineveh when the Tigris River suddenly overflowed and washed away the floodgates of the city and the foundations of the palace.

"Darkness shall pursue his enemies" raises a question in my mind regarding the place of permanent punishment. There is more said in Scripture about darkness being the lot of the lost than there is about fire. Darkness is mentioned here -- "and darkness shall pursue

his enemies." Even the Lord Jesus used the term: "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" ([Matt. 8:12](#); see also [Matt. 22:13](#)). Literal fire could only affect the physical, never the spiritual. But, oh, the fires of a conscience that has been suddenly alerted to the awful thing one did in rejecting Christ and in not doing the things he should have done. Think of the darkness of a lost eternity! Think of not being able to see where you are going at all. Darkness, to me, is a better and more fearful description of hell than fire is. That may be a new thought for you, and I would urge you to pursue it in the Word of God.

God's Decision To Destroy Nineveh And To Give The Gospel (1:9-15)

**What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end:
affliction shall not rise up the second time [Nah. 1:9].**

"What do ye imagine against the LORD?" Nahum puts this question directly to the Assyrian invaders. In effect he is asking, as Dr. Charles Feinberg has stated it, "Can you cope with such a God as Israel has?"

"He will make an utter end" -- that is, the Assyrian power will be completely destroyed. It will give you a better understanding of this to read the fulfillment in the historical account in [Isaiah 37](#).

"Affliction shall not rise up the second time." In other words, Nineveh will not be given a second chance. They have had their last chance. They've crossed over that invisible line -- I do not know where it is, but it is there somewhere, and you can step over it in your rejection of God. This does not mean that the grace of God could not reach you but that you can no longer reach it after you have come to that particular point.

**For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are
drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry
[Nah. 1:10].**

"For while they be folden together as thorns" probably describes the Assyrian army, which presented such a united front that they seemed like entangled thorns -- impossible to break through.

"While they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." God would completely destroy them. The fulfillment of this is recorded in [Isaiah 37:36-37](#).

I would say this especially to young people today: Make your decision for Christ while you are young and have a sharp mind. You can keep playing around with intellectualism (which I tried in college and almost got detoured), or you can play around as many are doing with drugs and alcohol, but Nahum says that the day will come when you will stumble around like a drunkard. If you stumble around like a drunkard, you cannot make a decision. A man who had been drinking called me the other night from back east. I refused to talk with him. I told him, "The liquor is speaking and not you. When you are willing to sober up, call me, and I'll be glad to talk with you, but I will not talk to liquor." May I say to you, Nineveh had reached the place where they could make no decision.

Along with the other minor prophets, Nahum makes a contribution to God's philosophy of government and His manner of dealing with individuals and with nations. The point Nahum is going to make is that whether you believe it or not, whether you can understand it or not, God is just and God is good when He judges a nation or an individual. God is still the God of love. He loves the lost. He is, as the apostle John tells us, ". . . the propitiation [the mercy seat] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" ([1John 2:2](#)).

Men are lost because they are sinners, and they are saved because they accept the overture of salvation that God extends to them. God will get that invitation to any individual on the topside of this earth who will accept it. I have come to believe that we may see a turning to God. I do not mean in great numbers, but I believe there will be a turning to God in response to the invitation given to every people on the topside of this earth. It looks to me right now that radio broadcasting will be the means of bringing that invitation to the unreached.

Nahum is going to be very extreme in what he says. God is going to judge Nineveh, and He is just and righteous in doing it. But God is love also. His judgment is actually an act of His love -- that is very difficult for us to comprehend, but it is absolutely true.

[There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor \[Nah. 1:11\].](#)

Nahum says now that there had come up against Judah this enemy -- the enemy is Assyria with its capital city of Nineveh. I think that there is agreement among all conservative Bible expositors that the invader that is spoken of here as "a wicked counsellor" was Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. This invasion by Sennacherib is recorded three times in Scripture: in [2Kings 18, 19](#); [2Chronicles 32](#); and also in [Isaiah 36, 37](#). When God says something three times, we ought to stop, look, and listen. When He says it once, that should be enough. When He says it twice -- sometimes He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you" -- it is extra important. But when He repeats something three times, you can just put it down that it is all-important.

Nahum is referring now to this wicked counselor who had come against Jerusalem. We read in the historical accounts that Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh against Jerusalem with the great army of Assyria. Rabshakeh threatened Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and Hezekiah was almost frightened to death by it all. I think that poor man probably couldn't sleep at night during that period of time. However, Hezekiah went into the temple and called upon God, and then the prophet Isaiah brought the message that Rabshakeh would not even shoot an arrow into the city of Jerusalem. Instead, he had to withdraw because of Assyria's campaign against Egypt in which Sennacherib needed his reinforcements. Then God Himself destroyed the army of the Assyrians! Assyria was greatly feared in Judah since during that period they had taken the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity and had dealt with them in a very brutal manner.

[Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more \[Nah. 1:12\].](#)

This is a rather remarkable verse, and we do not want to miss the point that is here. This expression, "Though they be quiet, and likewise many," does not quite make sense to me. What is it that God is saying here?

I know most of the men who worked as editors on The New Scofield Reference Bible, and all of them are just as human as you and I are. They are subject to mistakes and not one of them, as far as I know, feels that their notes were inspired. However, every now and then, they have really put in a helpful note. Their note on this verse is an example of how archaeology has confirmed many things in Scripture that we would not have known or understood otherwise, thus revealing the accuracy of the Word of God. The New Scofield Reference Bible (pp. 950-951) uses the following note on [verse 12](#):

In the context the expression "quiet, and likewise many," although a literal translation of the Hebrew, does not seem to make much sense. Actually the Hebrew here represents a transliteration of a long-forgotten Assyrian legal formula. Excavation in the ruins of ancient Ninevah, buried since 612 B.C., has brought to light thousands of ancient Assyrian tablets, dozens of which contain this Assyrian legal formula. It proves, on investigation, to indicate joint and several responsibility for carrying out an obligation. Nahum quotes the LORD as using this Assyrian formula in speaking to the Assyrians, saying in effect, "Even though your entire nation joins as one person to resist me, nevertheless I shall overcome you." As the words would have been equally incomprehensible to the later Hebrew copyists, their retention is striking evidence of the care of the scribes in copying exactly what they found in the manuscripts, and testifies to God's providential preservation of the Bible text.

Therefore, you can see that God used an Assyrian legal formula in expressing what He wanted to say. He was talking about Assyria, and He wanted them to understand what He was saying. When we look at this verse in light of what archaeology has discovered today, God was saying something that made sense to the Assyrians although it does not make sense to us today. When the Hebrew scholars came along, they didn't know what this meant either, but they translated it literally into English because they believed in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Thank God for that!

This leads me to say that this is one of the reasons I cannot approve of a lot of these so-called modern translations. They are not translations at all because many of them were done by men who do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Other men, although they believe it is the Word of God, have wanted to put it into a form that modern man could understand. I rather disagree with that method. I am very happy that The Living Bible calls itself "a paraphrased text." I would say concerning The Living Bible that it is a bad translation, but in many places it is a marvelous paraphrased text. If you will treat it as a paraphrase, that's fine, but do not believe that you are getting the literal text of Scripture.

This passage here in Nahum reveals that, although you might not understand something in Scripture, God says, "You take it as I have given it to you, and you will find out someday what it means -- that is, if you will work and study hard enough." The trouble is that we are trying to make the Word of God like pabulum, and we are trying to spoon-feed a bunch of babies who are too lazy to really study the Word of God. Although I

certainly am one who is accused of making the Word of God simple, I do believe that there ought to be a real reverence for the text of Scripture. I'm no Bible worshiper, I'm no bibliophile, by any means, but I do believe that there should be a reverence for the text of Scripture.

I have spent time on this verse because it contains this expression that I did not understand until this archaeological discovery was made. Archaeology has done a great deal of work yonder at the ancient city of Nineveh. The tell of Nineveh, across the Tigris River from the modern city of Mosul, was first excavated in the last century.

For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder [Nah. 1:13].

This seemed impossible in the day when Nahum wrote it because the nation of Assyria was to continue for a long time yet. But God said at that time, "I am going to break the yoke of this nation."

He also said:

And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile [Nah. 1:14].

What God says to Nineveh is harsh. He says, "I'm going to bury you." Nikita Khrushchev wasn't the first one who used that expression; he said that to the people of the United States, and it seemed very terrifying to us, naturally. Actually, Khrushchev was using a biblical expression, but he didn't know it. God said to Nineveh, "I'm going to bury you, and when I bury you, you'll go out of business as a nation." When was the last time you saw an Assyrian running around? There are not many, and they have no nation today. God said to them, "I'll bury you," and that is what He did.

He also said, "I'm going to get rid of your gods, that is, your idolatry." It was the Medes and the Babylonians who eventually came and destroyed the city of Nineveh in 612 B.C. The Assyrian idolatry was destroyed by the Medes who were a monotheistic people and did not worship idols. They were really iconoclasts, and they broke up the idolatry of Assyria.

Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off [Nah. 1:15].

God is saying through Nahum, "Don't leave Me. Don't withdraw from the Mosaic system. Don't give it up, because I intend to destroy your enemy and to send to you the Messiah, who will bring tidings of great joy."

Nahum says this in reference to Assyria, and you will find that Isaiah actually uses the same expression in [Isaiah 52:7](#), where it is amplified: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isaiah

spoke this in reference to the destruction of Babylon as he wrote to the southern kingdom of Judah. Nahum, writing to the northern kingdom, says the same thing but concerning Assyria. Then notice that Paul quotes this in his Epistle to the Romans: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" ([Rom. 10:13-15](#)).

I think Nahum was the first to say this and then Isaiah. Finally, Paul quotes Isaiah and makes a different application of it in the section of his epistle that refers to Israel, that is, in the dispensational section of Romans. Paul is arguing there that God is not through with the nation Israel and that in the future there will again come to them the good tidings of great joy. But it is also a worldwide message that is applicable to today. Paul writes, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" ([Rom. 10:13](#)).

But how will people hear without somebody bringing the message to them? The messengers must be sent, and I believe that God will do the sending. Isaiah wrote, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . ." ([Isa. 52:7](#)). That's not because they have beautiful feet, but because they have come to bring the message of the gospel. They may have traveled by boat, or they may have come by plane, or they may have come by radio, but they have come bringing the message. In our radio ministry we believe that the gospel should begin here at our own Jerusalem, and therefore we are attempting to continue to reach this country with the Word of God as well as we can. But we want also to go right to the ends of the earth via radio. Very frankly, I want my feet to be beautiful, and I want my feet to be ". . . shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" ([Eph. 6:15](#)). I want to walk all over this earth by radio, and I want to reach out to folk with the Good News today.

This is a marvelous way in which the Spirit of God uses Scripture. You get a good course in hermeneutics (the methods of interpretation of Scripture) when you read the little Book of Nahum. Nahum tells you how to interpret the Word of God. He has already shown us that we are to take it literally whether we understand it or not. There is an explanation, and the trouble is not with the Word of God; the trouble is with us when we do not understand it. Then we have also seen that God made direct interpretation of this Scripture to one nation at one time, to another nation at another time, and it now has a worldwide application today.

Chapter 2

THEME: Execution of God's decision to destroy Nineveh

In chapters 2 -- 3 we are going to see the justice and goodness of God exhibited in the execution of His decision to destroy Nineveh. God didn't just talk about destroying Nineveh -- God did it, and He did it in a very remarkable way.

Annihilation Of Assyria (2:1-13)

In chapter 2 Nahum prophesies a frightful judgment upon Assyria, and history testifies to its literal fulfillment. God has made it very clear in chapter 1 where He says, "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile" ([Nah. 1:14](#)); in other words, He says to Assyria, "I'm going to bury you." And, believe me, that is exactly what happened.

He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily [Nah. 2:1].

This refers to the Medo-Babylonian forces that came against Assyria and destroyed it in 612 B.C. under the leadership of Cyaxares and Nabopolassar. It is very interesting that Nahum, with biting sarcasm, tells Assyria, "You sure had better fortify yourself." The Assyrians spared no one, and they thought that their capital was impregnable and that they could withstand any kind of a judgment. But God is saying to this nation, "You are going to be destroyed."

For the LORD hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches [Nah. 2:2].

Nahum is saying that the time has come for Assyria's judgment because God has completed the judgment of His own people and intends to restore them. The mention of both "Jacob" and "Israel" is a reference to both the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel. "The emptiers" are the enemies of God's people, especially the nation of Assyria. The "vine branches" is probably a symbol of the nation of Israel (see [Ps. 80:8-16](#)).

This chapter is Nahum's detailed prophecy, which today is an accurate, historical record of what took place about one hundred years after Nahum. It speaks of the finality of the judgment of God upon the nation of Assyria; it speaks of the fact that Assyria would never make a comeback. Assyria never did make a comeback, and she never will. According to the Word of God, Babylon will resurge as well as some other nations. But Assyria, one of the great powers in the ancient world, will not make a comeback -- God makes that very, very clear.

The capture of Nineveh is described here in rather lurid terms. This passage reveals just how terrible it was, and you could write over this chapter, ". . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)). Assyria had been a very brutal nation, one of the most brutal nations the world has ever seen. For example, one of the things which the Assyrians did to an enemy was to bury him out in the desert sand right up to his chin. Then they would put a thong through his tongue and leave him out in the hot blazing sun, first to go mad, and then to die. That was one of the "nice little things" the Assyrians came up with. They also had several other little surprises for their enemies. It is said that when the Assyrians were on the march, in many places an entire community which lay in the line of their march would commit suicide rather than fall into the hands of brutal Assyrians. They were dreaded and feared in the ancient world. We find here in the Book of Nahum that Assyria is again beginning to move, but now their movement is in retreat. They are no longer the aggressor, but the Medes and the Babylonians are coming up against them.

The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken [Nah. 2:3].

"The shield of his mighty men is made red." This does not mean that their shields were made red with blood as some have suggested. The Assyrians were especially fond of the color of red, or scarlet. In all of their art, the color red is frequently found, and they evidently were very much interested in it. They made everything red. Some scholars believe that they used copper shields and that the reflection of the sunlight on the copper appeared red. Why did they do this? It is believed that they did this to frighten their enemies. As you well know, in warfare you intend to do as much bluffing as you do fighting. You want to frighten your enemies as much as you possibly can.

In World War II, when the United States issued a warning before the atom bomb was dropped, the Japanese thought that America was bluffing. That was one time when we were not bluffing, but they did not pay any attention to our warning at all. Today there are many who are using the crying towel, who flagellate this nation, declaring that we are guilty of this awful thing. I personally do not feel that our nation should go into sackcloth and ashes because of what we did at that time. It was an awful, horrible thing, but after all, war is a very awful, horrible thing. Our boys were being slain, and we were not winning the war by any means. The dropping of the bomb was what brought the war to an end, and my feeling is that we were justified in it. But I am also very frank to say that we see God's principle working out here in the Book of Nahum, that this enemy who was so brutal reaped exactly what they sowed. I do not think it will be any different with the United States. We happened to be the first ones to drop an atom bomb, and I am not sure that God is going to forget that.

The whole point is that in warfare you do attempt to bluff your enemy, and that is probably the reason the Assyrians used the color red. "The valiant men are in scarlet" -- again we have the color red, you see. The Assyrians had uniforms which were red.

"The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken." This refers to the armor that was on the chariots and the way in which they were built. The Assyrian chariots were not built of wood like the chariots you see in the museum in Cairo, Egypt. The Egyptians used a great deal of wood in building their chariots, but apparently the Assyrians were the ones who got the latest model in chariots. They were sort of the General Motors of chariot building.

The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings [Nah. 2:4].

Verse 4 will illustrate to us a method of interpretation of Scripture which is entirely wrong. Let me just say that Nahum is talking here about the battle between the chariots of the Assyrians and the chariots of the enemy. What happened was that when the enemy came against Assyria, they faced the well-defended city of Nineveh. Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian, tells us that Nineveh had fifteen hundred towers, each of which was two hundred feet high. But at the time of the siege, the Tigris River rose up and flooded, and it took out an entire section of the wall of the city. The river did what the enemy could

not do -- it breached the walls of Nineveh. Then the enemy was able to come in and penetrate the city itself. They opened the canals used for irrigation and thus flooded the palace. This is the way in which the enemy was able to take the city. The breach in the wall was so great that the chariots of the enemy could get in, and what is described in verse 4 is nothing in the world but the chariot battle which took place at that time.

There is a type of interpretation of prophecy which I deplore, and I regret that at the present hour we see so much of it. For example, there are those who say that this verse is a prophecy of the automobile! That is what Sir Robert Anderson calls "the wild utterances of prophecy mongers." There is a great interest in prophecy today because great world events and world crises are taking place. But we need to recognize that we can become fanatical and go overboard concerning prophecy. I believe it was Winston Churchill who said, "A fanatic is one who cannot change his mind, and he won't change the subject." Some folk today are just dwelling on prophecy (after all, it is a limited subject), and they become fanatical in their interpretations.

My friend, this prophecy has nothing in the world to do with the automobile. I do not think you could even make that kind of application of it for the very simple reason that automobiles don't rage in the streets. To tell the truth, sometimes the drivers rage when they get tied up in traffic, but the automobiles don't rage. Sometimes an automobile manages to stay right where it is and not move at all when it gets a vapor lock! And automobiles do not "jostle one against another in the broad ways." Actually, when one jostles against another, it means you have a wreck. One New Year's Eve, as I was out on the freeways of Southern California with a friend, we saw one wreck after another -- apparently there were quite a few drunk drivers out that evening. The point is that automobiles don't jostle one against another.

What is Nahum talking about when he says, "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways"? Well, if you have ever been in a museum which had some of the Assyrian relics, you have perhaps seen that on the chariot wheels, that is, on the hub of the wheels, there was a sharp blade. It was like a sword or a sickle, a very dangerous instrument which extended out from the wheel. The one driving the chariot would go up as close as he could get to the enemy, and this very sharp instrument would cut off the wooden wheel of the enemy's chariot. It would put a chariot out of business right away if you could cut off the wheel on one side. That is the jostling together that Nahum mentions here, and it hasn't anything to do with the automobile!

"They shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." The chariots moved very fast in that day, although in our day it would seem very slow. The Assyrians had developed the art of fighting by chariot to a very fine degree, and the enemy had picked that up so that when they clashed in the broad ways of the city and outside the city, the battle was a frightful, horrible thing. That, my friend, is all that Nahum is talking about here.

I believe that you can make moral and spiritual applications from the Word of God, but I don't think that you can take this prophecy and interpret it in a literal way for our day. Do you see what a remarkable book Nahum is? We have here another great principle for interpreting the Word of God. For example, when you read in Isaiah, ". . . therefore shalt

thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips" ([Isa. 17:10](#)), you cannot interpret that to mean the orange trees which today abound in that land. The natural habitat of the orange tree is the land of Israel. In fact, that whole area grew oranges way back even in the days of Solomon. When Solomon speaks in the Song of Solomon of dwelling under the apple tree, the "apple" referred to is actually a citron fruit, probably an orange tree (see [Song 2:3](#)). My point is that we cannot take Scriptures that have an interpretation for a different people at a different time and try to bring them up-to-date and interpret them for our own day.

I want to mention again that the little Books of Jonah and Nahum go together. What you have in the Book of Jonah is actually not a prophecy but rather an account of Jonah's missionary activity in the city of Nineveh when the total population turned to God and God spared them from judgment. But time went by, and they departed from the Lord again. One hundred years after Jonah, God raised up Nahum, and his entire message is directed against Nineveh. What we have, therefore, in the Book of Nahum is a very vivid prophecy of the total annihilation of this city. The city was so completely destroyed that it was not until 1850 that the site of Nineveh was located and excavated. A great deal has been learned about the city of Nineveh and the Assyrian civilization through that excavation.

He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared [[Nah. 2:5](#)].

The destruction of Nineveh came about when the Medes came against the city under Cyaxares. Babylon at that time was not the greatest kingdom, but they did join with the Medes in this battle.

The king of Assyria depended upon his military leaders, but because of their fear, they stumbled and fell in their march. Of course, the defense of the city's wall was of primary importance in the battle.

The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved [[Nah. 2:6](#)].

Nahum prophesies here that the Tigris River will be turned into the city. At the time this campaign was carried on, the heavy rains in that area caused the Tigris River to reach flood stage. The floodwaters took out a section of the wall, and the city became like a pool of water. "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." I think that the foundations of the palace were swept out and that the water absolutely brought the palace down. Secular history tells us that part of the city wall was taken out. About 2 1/2 miles of the wall of Nineveh was right along by the side of the Tigris River. The city was situated well above the normal flow of the river, but with the river at flood stage, it took out a whole section of the wall, and the enemy was able to enter the city. In other words, the overflowing river made the breach that the enemy was attempting to make themselves. It would seem as though the Lord cooperated in the destruction of the city. The floodgates were opened, and even the palace was brought down by the flooding. We are told that the enemy opened the irrigation ditches and the palace was completely inundated with water.

And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts [[Nah. 2:7](#)].

Huzzab literally means "it is decreed." This verse should read, "And it is decreed, she shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering [or, beating] upon their breasts." I used to hunt doves in Texas as a young fellow. Late in the afternoon, we would hunt down where a dam had been put up and there was a body of water used for the watering of cattle -- we called it a tank in those days. The birds would come there late in the afternoon, and as we would come up over the embankment, we'd be able to get a good shot at the doves. They would all take flight, and the flapping of their wings would be like the sound of beating upon your chest. This is the picture that is given to us here by Nahum. The beating upon their breast was just like the noise made by doves taking flight. The dove's call, by the way, is a mourning noise, and that is the reason it is called the mourning dove. I have been told that that mourning noise is actually the love call of the dove.

But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back [[Nah. 2:8](#)].

"But Nineveh is of old like a pool of water." The flood had entered, and the city became like a lake.

"Stand, stand, shall they cry; but none shall look back." The command was given to them to hold their ground, but when they saw the flood coming in along with the enemy, they decided it was time not to listen to their commanders but to turn and run away as fast as possible.

Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture [[Nah. 2:9](#)].

"Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold." The enemy is invited to take the spoil of silver and to take the spoil of gold. "For there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture." The city of Nineveh was very wealthy and highly ornate. The palaces were beautiful, and the people lived in luxury because of the success they had had in warfare. You see, the Assyrians had brought in booty from all of the great nations of that day -- even the southern kingdom of Judah was paying tribute to them at that time -- so that the city had become very wealthy.

She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all lions, and the faces of them all gather blackness [[Nah. 2:10](#)].

"She is empty, and void, and waste." Assyria had brought in booty from everywhere else and had gathered it all in one place, but their enemies came in and took it all out.

"And the heart melteth, and the knees smite together." When your knees smite together, it means that you are afraid, it means there is fear in your heart. This is what happened to the Assyrians.

"And much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness." This was a time of great fear and dread because the Assyrians knew that they were hated by the world of that day. All their neighbors hated them because of their brutality. Now vengeance was being taken out upon them. Instead of the blood being all drawn from their faces, Nahum says that "the faces of them all gather blackness." I take it that this means that they were putting on sackcloth and throwing ashes upon their heads.

Where is the dwelling of the loins, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid? [Nah. 2:11].

Both Assyria and Babylon used the lion as the symbol of their empires. Nahum could be referring here to the actual lions which the Assyrians had there, or he could be referring to their strong young men because the lion was the symbol of the strength of the kingdom. The whole point is that, whether it is the literal lions or the strength of their army, they are gone -- they've left, or they've been killed.

The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin [Nah. 2:12].

Whether these were the literal lions or the Assyrian army, they had once been well-fed, but now all of that is ended. They no longer have anything to eat because all has been taken away by the enemy.

Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard [Nah. 2:13].

"Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts." God doesn't say that very often. He says it only here and to Gog and Magog in [Ezekiel 38](#) and [Ezekiel 39](#). Many of us believe that the reference in Ezekiel is directed to modern Russia. That is pretty much established today by conservative scholarship. No one but a liberal who disregards facts and evidence would say that that passage does not refer to modern Russia. God says there to Russia, "I am against you," and He sets down a pattern for us. Russia has had the gospel; actually, they had it before we did. But today communism is opposed to God. It is atheistic; its basic philosophy is that it is opposed to God. But God beat them to the draw. He said to them long before they appeared as a nation, "I am against you."

Here in Nahum He also says, "I am against you," and He is talking to Nineveh. They were a people who had had a personal messenger from God (Jonah), and they had turned to the living God, but now they have turned from Him. When you have had the light and you reject it, the Lord Jesus put it like this: ". . . If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" ([Matt. 6:23](#)). In other words, if the light is shining right into your eyes and you say you cannot see, that means you are blind. This reminds me of the story of a young man who was in a mine explosion together with other men. The rescuers got to them as quickly as they could, taking away all of the wreckage and debris between those on the outside and the trapped miners. When they got through to them, the first thing they did was to turn on a light. But this young man stood there after

the light came on and said, "Why don't they turn on the light?" Everybody looked at him in amazement because they knew then that the explosion had blinded him. But, you see, as long as they were in darkness, nobody could tell that he was blind. He couldn't tell it himself because he thought the lights were still out. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" -- it means you are blind. This is the picture that Nahum gives to us. The Assyrians had had light, but they rejected it; and when you reject light, your responsibility is greater.

"I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions." Again, this could be literal lions or the young men, but I believe it refers to their young men because the lion was the symbol of the strength of the nation.

"And I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard." This is a note of finality. One hundred years earlier God had graciously saved Nineveh when they repented and turned to Him; but time has marched on, they have lapsed into an awful apostasy, and God is now going to judge them. He says to them, "I'm against you. I'm going to bring you down. I will annihilate you, and you will never appear again." This ought to be a message today to those who have completely turned their backs upon God: it means total judgment.

Chapter 3

THEME: Avenging action of God justified

In chapter 3 Nahum gives the cause for and justifies God's destruction of the city of Nineveh. Nineveh's destruction is an example of the fact that ". . . whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)). This is also true of a nation. You will find that in many ways God deals with individuals and nations in a very similar manner.

Many literary critics have found in this third chapter one of the most vivid descriptions of the destruction of a city that is imaginable. You will not find anything in any language more descriptive than this.

[Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not \[Nah. 3:1\].](#)

We are given here a picture of the internal condition of the city of Nineveh. "Woe to the bloody city!" Nineveh, as the capital of Assyria, was known in the ancient world to be very brutal, very bloody. They were feared and dreaded by other nations. The army of the Assyrians, although it actually moved rather slowly, was just like a hurricane which devours everything in its pathway. As I mentioned before, at times an entire community would commit suicide rather than suffer the brutal attack of Assyria.

"It is all full of lies." Assyria was a nation which could never be depended upon. She was not faithful to fulfill the promises which she made to other nations to help them and protect them.

What better description could you have even of our own country right now? I feel that we are given very few facts but a great deal of propaganda today. This is true not only of Washington, D.C., and the news media but of all areas of our society. This is true of our

government regardless of which party the information comes from. My opinion of our two-party system is that what we have is Tweedledum and Tweedledee -- you can pick either one of them. At one point in my life I thought I needed to change from one party to the other, and I did change. But now I need another change, not back to where I came from but to be free of this whole thing in which I am fed nothing in the world but propaganda and never given the truth. The one thing that is needed today is the truth.

One of the reasons God judged the city of Nineveh was that it was "all full of lies and robbery." These things characterized the life of the city. Likewise, our homes today are not safe. I was recently in the home of friends in Louisville, Kentucky. They are lovely folk, and they have a very lovely southern home in which they have some beautiful antiques. Do you know that they have had to put bars on their windows and double and triple locks on their doors! Where do you think we live today? We say that we live in a nation of law and order -- but it hasn't been that. What an apt description this verse is of the United States! When I first began to study this, I felt like asking Nahum, "Are you talking about us? You're giving a vivid description of Nineveh, but it is also a picture of my own nation."

The Books of Jonah and Nahum reveal that God deals with gentile nations and that He did so back in the days of the Old Testament. They also show that the government of God moves in the governments of men. God today will overrule the sin of man. He will overrule a nation. As you come down through history, you see great civilizations, one after another, crumbling in the dust and the debris of the ages. Why? Because God judged them, friend -- that is the reason why. The United States is no pet of God. We're not something special. We think we are. We can boast of the fact that right now we are the strongest nation in the world, but even that might be questionable today. We live in a security that may be a false security, because God brings great nations down, and He makes that very clear here.

***The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels,
and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots [Nah. 3:2].***

Nahum gives a graphic description of these chariots. They are like armored tanks -- they were the tanks of the ancient world. As they came inside the city, you could hear the noise of the whip as the driver whipped up his horse. You could hear the rattling of the wheels and the noise "of the prancing horses, and of the jumping [bounding] chariots." The chariots were leaping over everything, especially dead bodies.

The first two verses of this chapter describe the internal condition of Ninevah. Lies and robbery marked the culture and the climate of the city. This is the reason they acted as they did on the outside toward their enemies -- their brutality, their total unconcern for other nations, their lording it over others. The very cause for their methods is that internally they were wrong. You see, man does not become a sinner because he sins. He sins because he is a sinner. Fundamentally, on the inside, man is a sinner, and that accounts for his actions. I am sure that many people in that day said of the Assyrians, "These people are uncivilized!" Inside the city, it was full of lies and robbery. That which did not characterize our nation years ago (there was a great deal of it, but it wasn't the predominant thing) -- lies and robbery -- just happens to characterize the internal

condition of our nation today. Why? Because we are highly civilized? No. It is because we are sinners. My friend, we are sinners.

The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcases; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses [Nah. 3:3].

The number of the dead was unbelievable. I tell you, if a well-placed bomb were dropped somewhere in this country, we would probably see the same sort of thing. There are nations who may pretend to be friendly but who would not hesitate for five seconds to drop that bomb on this country if they thought they could get by with it. And I'm beginning to think that they believe they can get by with it.

We have in [verses 3-4](#) that which characterized the external conditions of Nineveh. They had been a brutal and cruel enemy, and they were now reaping what they had sown.

Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts [Nah. 3:4].

"Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot." The city of Nineveh is here likened unto a harlot. She was the one whom all the nations played up to. Note the shame of this city. God likens her to a harlot, a "wellfavoured harlot," suggesting that all the world courted her.

"The mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." Witchcraft is mentioned twice here. This is a reference to the occult. Don't for one moment think that the idolatry of the ancient world was meaningless. The apostle Paul called an idol "... nothing in the world ..." ([1Cor. 8:4](#)), but back of the idol is Satan, and back of idolatry is that which is satanic. I do not need to labor this point today. If you are not acquainted with what is happening today in the world of the occult, then you have not been to Southern California. It is not happening just among a bunch of down-and-outers or a bunch of criminals or in the underworld. The occult is active on our college campuses today and in the best sections of our cities. People are given over to witchcraft today. It is amazing how many people will buy their horoscope, which they will then follow. Many folk carry amulets, good luck pieces, charms, little dolls, and all that sort of thing. This is growing by leaps and bounds in a materialistic age and culture, which thought it had graduated from such things, but now we find there has been a return to it. This is exactly what the great city of Nineveh had turned to, and God says that He is justified in judging the city because of its harlotry and witchcraft.

The Book of Revelation tells us that when we come to the end of this age, the organized church will become a harlot, engaging in this type of thing. I am of the opinion that we can see a movement in that direction even now. All of this is very dangerous today. I know a very fine Pentecostal preacher who preaches the Word of God and believes in speaking in tongues and in healing. He expressed to me that there is a real danger in the tongues movement. He said, "Not only does our group speak in tongues, there are those today in the occult who are also doing it. In my own church, we are being very careful

about this sort of thing." This man is a spiritually enlightened man, and he is rather reluctant to engage in "tongues" speaking. I would put up a warning to you today, friend: just because a thing seems to have a mark of the supernatural on it does not mean it is scriptural. You had better examine it very carefully to see whether it is scriptural. If it is supernatural and not scriptural, it is not of God. And there is only one other fellow who is in the business of the supernatural other than God, and that is Satan. Satan will ape God and imitate Him in every way that he possibly can.

God is giving to us the reason He judged Nineveh. He is justifying His actions in destroying this city. Now He makes this very remarkable statement --

Behold I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame [[Nah. 3:5](#)].

"Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts." This is the second time that God says this to Nineveh. He also says this to Gog and Magog in [Ezekiel 38](#) -- [Ezekiel 39](#). We believe that definitely refers to Russia. When I graduated from seminary, I would not accept that [Ezekiel 38](#) -- [Ezekiel 39](#) referred to Russia. So I decided to make a study of it on my own, and I now have several reasons why I am confident that it is Russia which is mentioned there. Russia is a nation which wasn't even in existence in Ezekiel's day, but God said to them, "I am against you." Well, we now know why He said that -- they are an atheistic nation.

Assyria was a nation to whom God said, "I am against you," not because they were atheistic but because they were polytheistic. Assyria was given over to idolatry -- back of the idol was the occult, back of the idol was witchcraft. Witchcraft has become a reality to many today. Men are finding that there is a reality to it. And it is those in the upper echelon who are making this discovery. I have been told on rather good authority, from those who are in our capital of Washington, that it is amazing and alarming to see the number of people there who appeal to fortune-tellers and to horoscopes in an attempt to interpret the future. Men want to know the future. But God said to Nineveh, a city greatly involved in the occult, "I am against thee."

"I will discover thy skirts upon thy face." In other words, "I am going to uncover thy skirts from thy face." We live in a day of a great deal of nudity. With their tongues in their cheeks, men try to call it art to present that which is salacious and sinful and suggestive. There is a great display of the nude by both men and women today. The Assyrian civilization had sunk pretty low but not as low as we have. They did not display the human body -- they were not given over to that. It was a disgrace for a woman to be displayed nude. God speaks here of the shame that He is going to bring upon Nineveh. He says, "I will uncover thy skirts from thy face. I am going to pull your skirts up over your face. You have been a harlot, and I'm going to reveal you and all of the lurid details." Believe me, that was a real disgrace for them.

"I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame." That is what God said He would do to this nation. Assyria went down, my friend. A great nation, a great civilization, with all its riches and power, went down into the dust never to rise again. God said that is what He would do to them.

**And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and will make thee vile,
and will set thee as a gazingstock [Nah. 3:6].**

God says to Ninevah through Nahum, "I am going to bring you down. I'm opposed to you. I will expose you to the world for what you are." The excavations which have brought to light this great civilization reveal that all of this is quite accurate. And the Book of Nahum just happens to be a vivid prophecy which was given long before this actually took place. This is something quite amazing, is it not?

All of this description which is given here is something I do not want to pass over lightly because it has such a tremendous application for us today and is such an apt picture of the present day. The Book of Nahum reveals God's method in dealing with the nations of the world. I do not think He has changed His method, and if He hasn't, we are in trouble, and I mean deep trouble, my friend. We ought to be praying for our nation.

God calls this city a harlot, saying that He is absolutely going to display all of the shame and filth and vileness of this great civilization and make it a gazingstock, a spectacle, to the world. Such was the end of the great Assyrian Empire.

**And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall
flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan
her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? [Nah. 3:7].**

In other words, God says, "Where in the world will I get people to come and mourn over this city? Nobody will mourn over it. Nobody will weep over it. There will be no mourners there." That is a very sad situation, a very sad one indeed. Several funeral home directors here in Pasadena became my personal friends over the years and would sometimes call me to conduct a funeral. One of the saddest experiences that I ever had was the funeral I conducted for a dear old man. He was a Christian who had come out here from the east with his wife for the sake of her health. She had died, and then he became bedridden, and people forgot about him. When he died, I guess many didn't even recognize his name. When I went down to conduct the funeral, there wasn't anybody there. Nobody came -- to me it was the saddest thing. I knew the funeral director pretty well, and I went to him and said, "Get all your office workers and come on in there. We're going to have a funeral service." He rounded up everyone that he could and brought them in. We had about a dozen folk. So I brought a gospel message, a message of hope for the Christian. It was wonderful to be able to say, "Jesus died for our sins, and He rose again for our justification." But it was sad to have a funeral service like that, where no friends attended. God said that there were not going to be any mourners at the funeral of Nineveh. Nahum prophesied that the whole world would rejoice in that day, and they did. When God said this through Nahum, no one would have believed it unless he had believed God and accepted it by faith, but it came to pass just as God said it would.

**Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the
rivers, that has the waters round about it, whose rampart was the
sea, and her wall was from the sea? [Nah. 3:8].**

"Art thou better than populous No?" -- No-Amon was what we know as Thebes, the great capital of upper Egypt. Dr. Charles Feinberg's books on the minor prophets are very

excellent -- I know of none better. I would like to quote from his book, Jonah, Micah and Nahum (p. 147), in which he describes the city of No-Amon:

It was the capital city of the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasties, and boasted such architecture as the Greeks and Romans admired. The Greeks called it Diospolis, because the Egyptian counterpart of Jupiter was worshipped there. It was located on both banks of the river Nile. On the eastern bank were the famous temples at Karnak and Luxor. Homer, the first Greek poet, spoke of it as having 100 gates. Its ruins cover an area of some 27 miles. Amon, the chief god of the Egyptians, was shown on Egyptian relics as a figure with a human body and a ram's head. The judgment of this godless and idolatrous city was foretold by Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 46:25](#)) and Ezekiel ([Ezekiel 30:14-16](#)). No-Amon was situated favorably among the canals of the Nile with the Nile itself as a protection. The Nile appears as a sea when it overflows its banks annually. Nineveh can read her fate in that of No-Amon, for she is no better than the mighty Egyptian capital.

God is saying to Nineveh that the city of Thebes should have been an example to the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians were the ones who had destroyed Thebes, a great city which had seemed impregnable. It seemed that no one could take it, but the Assyrians did take it and destroy it. This should have been an example to the Assyrians. God had judged Thebes, and He is here justifying the fact that He will also judge Nineveh. The government of God moves in the governments of men in this world today.

"Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers. . . ." "Rivers" is used in the plural to mean a great deal of water. When the Nile River would overflow at the flood season, it looked like the ocean. ". . . That had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea?" Thebes was built so that at the flood season it would not be flooded at all. Rather, the water provided a natural protection for the city.

Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers [[Nah. 3:9](#)].

These were the allies of Thebes which were located around her. The city of Thebes, at one time the capital of the Egyptian Empire, felt that it could never fall because there was a big desert on both sides, the Nile River was a protection, and they had allies to the north and to the south. How could anybody get to them? But the Assyrians did. The Assyrians, in turn, felt that they were impregnable in their day. And today we feel that we have enough atomic weapons and other sophisticated hardware to defend ourselves. My friend, when God's time comes, we will go down. Our best defense today simply does not happen to be in the area of military weapons. Our best defense would be a return to God and to a recognition of Him in our government. I am not impressed by what I see in Washington. They have a little prayer breakfast and then, I'm told, some of them step outside and cuss up a storm! Some men make a profession of being Christians, and yet their language is so vile you cannot even listen to it. What hypocrisy there is today! Is God going to let us off? Are we something special? I think not. Our best defense today would be once again to have men of character in government -- even if they were not Christians, if they would at least espouse the great morality set forth in the Word of God. That is the thing that built our nation. I am not greatly impressed with some of our

founding fathers. I do not think, for example, that Thomas Jefferson was a Christian, but I will say that he had a respect for the Word of God. He believed in the morality of the Word of God. When we despise and contradict that morality as we do today, God cannot bless us as a nation, and I do not think He will.

Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains [\[Nah. 3:10\]](#).

This is what Assyria had done to Thebes, and now chickens are coming home to roost. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" [\(Gal. 6:7\)](#).

Thou also shalt be drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt seek strength because of the enemy [\[Nah. 3:11\]](#).

The Assyrians will try to fortify their courage by getting drunk, but that is not going to help them a bit.

All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater [\[Nah. 3:12\]](#).

I used to have a fig tree in my yard. When the figs were ripe, all you had to do was just touch a branch, and they all would come tumbling down. This is what Nahum says to Nineveh here: "All your defenses are like that. The minute the enemy comes, he is going to break right through them."

Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars [\[Nah. 3:13\]](#).

I believe that the thought here is that the men were acting like women. The men were very womanly. Or this could mean that women were actually the ones in the positions of authority. Frankly, I do not think God is for the women's liberation movement which we have today. I still believe that woman's place is in the home. I feel very frankly that the church is at fault in using women in too many offices in the church. A woman's first place is not to teach a Sunday school class. She is to raise her own family -- that is her place. Women are being taken away from their homes by church work and every other kind of work. Unless she is forced to work for a living because her husband has passed on or is unable to work, I do not believe a woman's working is justified. I know that I will get reactions for saying this, but I am saying it because I think that this is one mark of the disintegration and downfall of civilization.

Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brickkiln [\[Nah. 3:14\]](#).

At the last minute, the Assyrians would get busy making bricks to fortify themselves. They would heat up water, which they would carry to the top of the city wall. They would then pour a bucket of the scalding water down upon the fellow who was scaling

the wall. He was through scaling the wall, I can assure you of that -- he would soon find himself back on the ground.

There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts [Nah. 3:15].

Nahum prophesies that they will try to bring in reinforcements but that they will not help.

Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away [Nah. 3:16].

Each year their national wealth increased, for they were great merchants, but all of that was going to come to an end.

Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are [Nah. 3:17].

When the time came, the leaders would manage to escape, that is, for a little while anyway.

Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them [Nah. 3:18].

The leadership of Assyria disintegrated to the place where they no longer attempted to lead the nation.

I trust that I will not be misunderstood because I am not discussing politics, certainly not from any party viewpoint. (As far as I am concerned, I am disgusted with both of the major political parties in this nation of ours.) I believe that one of the great evidences of our disintegration and deterioration as a nation is the lack of leadership that exists on the national level, the state level, the county level, and even at the city and community levels. There is a lack of real leadership at all levels. It seems that the one with the big mouth and the big talk is the one who is elected. And it seems that the rich man is the one elected. Abraham Lincoln could not run for the office of President today -- he wouldn't have enough money. God says that the lack of leadership, along with the other things He has mentioned, is what brought Assyria down.

What God has said in this chapter concerning Assyria fits our nation like a glove. One glove fits Assyria -- and that's been fulfilled. The other glove fits the United States. But are we listening to God today? No. No one to speak of is paying any attention. Certainly the leadership of our nation is not. The tragedy of the hour is our retreat from God and our rejection of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Savior of the world.

Listen to God's final words to Ninevah. He says this with a note of finality and of dogmatism. This makes your spine tingle. It is frightening indeed --

There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually? [Nah. 3:19].

The Assyrian people had sinned and sinned and sinned -- it was a way of life with them. When people want to point a finger and say that God is wrong, that God permits evil and does nothing about evil, God says to them, "I do do something about it." My friend, you can look around today at the many injustices in our world, but God is doing something about them. God is just and righteous. He was a God of love even when He destroyed Nineveh and wiped it clean like a dish. It disappeared off the face of the map and off the face of the earth -- and God took full responsibility for its judgment.

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(Recommended for Further Study)

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